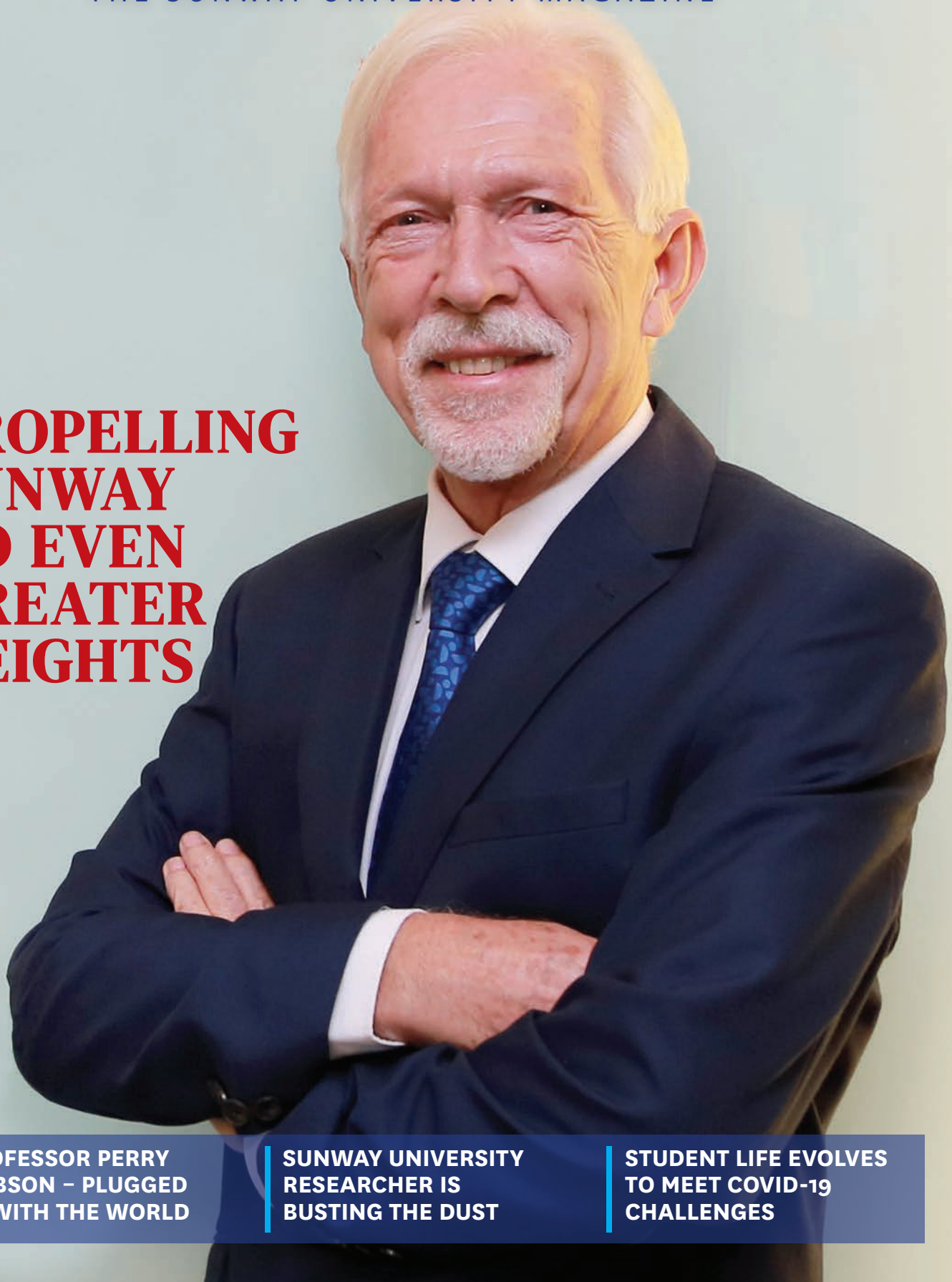


BLAZE

THE SUNWAY UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

PROPELLING SUNWAY TO EVEN GREATER HEIGHTS



**PROFESSOR PERRY
HOBSON - PLUGGED
IN WITH THE WORLD**

**SUNWAY UNIVERSITY
RESEARCHER IS
BUSTING THE DUST**

**STUDENT LIFE EVOLVES
TO MEET COVID-19
CHALLENGES**



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SCHOOL OF ARTS STUDENTS FILM A REWARDING LOVE STORY

A love letter can be presented in many forms. And so, the Department of Film and Performing Arts did it in their innate way.

BA (Hons) Digital Film Production students, Alina Wong, Sheldon Chong, Justin Tan Jing Wen, and Derrek Lee Mun Wei produced a documentary about Datin Elaine Khaw's unconditional love for her family.

Her husband, Datuk Ooi Eow Jin, was diagnosed with Alzheimer's and her son, Raymond, has a brain tumour.

Faced with severe financial hardship due to rising medical costs, Elaine decided to sell *kuih kapit* or "love letters" as a means of paying for the medical bills.

"Datin Elaine had been selling *kuih kapit* to support her family. She ends up writing a love letter for her husband to remind him of everything he has forgotten," shared Alina, a co-director of the film.

"We knew it was a timeless story, that with delicate direction and production, we could turn their story into a film that was special," she added.



"With Love, Elaine" is the first film highlighting the struggles of Datin Elaine. The students ran across the story on an online news article. Little did they know that it would create a great impact.

The film won the MAS See Films: Students' Category Jury Award at the 16th Mini Film Festival.

Alina responded, "You have to completely love what you do, and in the end, I promise, you'll make something that you'll love too."

Sheldon, who directed the film too, said his takeaway experience was improving his storytelling skills.

"It is important to communicate the expectations, to know what you want, in order to achieve a certain vision." **B**



The crew with Datin Elaine

PROPELLING SUNWAY TO EVEN GREATER HEIGHTS with the New President Onboard

A dual Dutch Canadian citizen, Professor Sibrandes Poppema became aware of Sunway University through Professor Peh Suat Cheng, who he had supervised on her Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) studies at the University of Groningen many years back.

First landed in Sunway University in 2017, Professor Poppema was invited to give a public lecture on “Building a leading university: From regional roots to global significance” in the Jeffrey Cheah Distinguished Speakers Series.

From 2008–2018, he was President of the University of Groningen, established in 1614 in the Netherlands and currently a global top 100 research-intensive university. Among his greatest achievements were the merger of the Faculty of Medical Sciences and the Academic Hospital, transforming into the University Medical Centre Groningen and the establishment of Healthy Ageing as the main research focus for the Centre.

Professor Poppema studied medicine at the University of Groningen, where he also performed his PhD thesis on the Immunopathology of Hodgkin’s disease and trained as a pathologist. Following that, he had post-doctoral appointments at the University of Kiel in Germany as well as at Harvard University in the States. In 1985, he was appointed as the J.K. de Cock Professor of Immunopathology at the University of Groningen. Over the years, he published over 240 articles on the topics relevant to Immunology, Haematology and Oncology, which were cited more than 18,000 times.

In recognition of his vast scientific achievements, he was awarded the Knighthood in the Order of the Netherlands Lion by Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands in 2007.

He was recently awarded the Officer’s Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany by the President, Frank-Walter Steinmeier. This is to recognise his efforts in promoting international cooperation on research and education between Germany and the Netherlands.



Professor Poppema received the Officer’s Cross of the Order of Merit Award, with the presence of (from left) Tan Sri Dr Jeffrey Cheah, Mrs Yoke Poppema and Dr Peter Blomeyer, German Ambassador to Malaysia





The Sunway Journey Begins

Having lived and worked in the Netherlands, Germany, the United States, Canada and now in Malaysia, Professor Poppema and his wife enjoy the warm weather and nature of Malaysia, not forgetting the highly varied food choices available here.

“What I like about Malaysia is very much influenced by what I like about Sunway. I like the fact that Sunway is a sustainable city. A highlight for me is the elevated walkways that make it possible to travel healthy, safe and CO₂ neutral,” shared Professor Poppema. “The dedication of Sunway University to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) is another major attraction because I strongly believe that the next generation of leaders should learn in such an environment.”

Joining Sunway University in early 2019, Professor Poppema took on the role as the Tan Sri Jeffrey Cheah Distinguished Professor, and advisor to the Chancellor especially on the establishment of the new medical school at Sunway University.

“What I saw in Sunway was the vision of Tan Sri Dr Jeffrey Cheah, from an abandoned tin mine wasteland to a smart and sustainable city wonderland. I share his vision that education is by far the best way to escape poverty,” shared Professor Poppema.

Currently, Professor Poppema is driving the establishment of Sunway University Medical school. He too, actively promotes scientific and educational collaborations with partners at the University of Cambridge, Harvard University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston (MIT).

“The new structure of the School of Medical and Life Sciences is an important vehicle for the development

of the Sunway University Medical School. The medical school will help ease the capacity problem in medical training in Malaysia by teaching medical students and specialists. The curriculum will be developed by us together with the University of Cambridge, and will be science-focused, aiming to train physician scientists and specialists that can enhance the medical research profile in Malaysia.”

“Another important development for the University is the start of engineering programmes, with electrical engineering as the first to be offered this year. We already have a number of research centres in the field of engineering with top scientists, and Malaysia as a country is very strong in the field of engineering,” Professor Poppema shared.

Professor Poppema has also promoted the collaboration between scientists at Sunway University and partners at Cambridge, Oxford, Harvard and MIT in Boston. “It is necessary for us to start up additional concrete projects with our high-level partners Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard and MIT in Boston and to leverage this in collaborations in the ASEAN region as is currently undertaken with the formation of consortia.”

Sunway University’s ongoing collaborations in medical research include the establishment of the ASEAN Microbiomics Centre with partners in Singapore; and exploring collaboration with researchers from Harvard Medical School on global health.

With researchers in the Jeffrey Cheah Biomedical Institute in Cambridge and Sunway Medical Centre, researchers at Sunway University performed analysis of the viral sequences of COVID-19 patients in Malaysia and are developing peptide-based vaccines for COVID-19.

Sunway University is a private, not-for-profit university and is only ten years old, but has already achieved a top 2% ranking in the QS World University Ranking. A recent analysis by Web of Science data shows that Sunway University is the 10th largest producer of scientific papers in Malaysia in 2020 and only trails Petronas University among the private universities.

To accelerate the international development and advancement of the University, Professor Poppema believes that it is important to ensure that all Sunwayians are geared towards the same direction.

Professor Poppema who is a life-long learner driven by curiosity, excitedly looks forward to his new role as the President of Sunway University. He shared that with the efforts of all staff and student, he hopes to help the University to achieve new heights in education, research, societal impact, entrepreneurship and internationalisation.

With his rich academic and administrative experiences, Professor Poppema hopes are high for the University. Looking forward for the continuous growth of the University in the rankings for the time to come, Professor Poppema shared, “We must do well together and tell about it. Achievements and reputation combine into a virtuous cycle. When there is a rise in reputation for the University, the ranking will rise too. Whereas a higher ranking results in a higher reputation. Through continuous innovation, we can realise Tan Sri Jeffrey Cheah’s dream, which is also our common dream, and is for Sunway University to become the Harvard of the East.” **B**



SUNWAY UNIVERSITY'S RADIO STATION WINS AWARD BEFORE LAUNCH

Delay is not denial. This is the account for the newly launched radio station – SunFM, which Sunway University School of Arts established in late 2020 with its studios positioned in the student lounge on level 9 of the university building.

Originally planned for launch way earlier, SunFM had to postpone its timeline due to the COVID-19 outbreak. However, hope came when SunFM joined an essay contest held by a sponsor for World College Radio Day.

The submitted essay described the delays for the station's launch which touched Sourcefabric to award SunFM with a one-year subscription for web streaming with its AirTime software.

SunFM also celebrates airing its maiden broadcast on hundreds of campus radio stations throughout the world with an hour show for a global event called "World College Radio Day".

The global event inaugurated in 2011 set this year's theme as 'Global Solidarity Rocks', with the spirit to unite everyone during this unprecedented time. 600 radio stations participated in it. Out of which, SunFM was among twenty-four radio stations selected for the global radio marathon.

With that, Sunway students from different departments came together to produce a one-hour podcast, which consisted of several features and a lot of music.

These students were Jeannelle Khor as the Program Director, Jeremy Tang as the Music Director, Gabriella Bong as the Station Manager, Chloe Liew, Amanda Goh, Celine Lee, Tze Wei, Leann Ng, Valerie Ching and Yin Bei.

The features comprised of interviews with local social media influencers that included Azmyl Yusof, Department of Film and Performing Arts Senior Lecturer. Current affairs were also discussed, for example, students' sentiments towards

dual mode teaching and a brief interview with Professor Bradley Freeman, Head of Department of Communication, on an article he wrote on college radio.

For the songs, the artists starred were Joey Chua's Bye, Ty:Del's No Turning Back, The Sam Willows' Robot, and Crinkle Cut's Morning Sun.

Currently, SunFM is planning to offer two programming streams in the future. The commencement is set to happen once the music format is decided. Students who are interested to join the station are welcome to visit the SunFM website from the School of Arts main web page (<https://university.sunway.edu.my/sunfm>). **B**





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DIGITAL
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Destiny

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CHINA
The statue is a tribute to the Chinese people's spirit of perseverance and innovation. It is a symbol of the university's commitment to excellence and its vision of becoming a leading digital technology university. The statue is a masterpiece of art and engineering, and it is a source of pride for the university and its students.

WRITING YOUR **DESTINY**, CREATING THE MASTERPIECE OF YOUR LIFE

Standing at over five metres tall and four metres in width, 'Destiny' makes an impressive entrance statement at the Sunway University foyer.

Commissioned by Tan Sri Dr Jeffrey Cheah AO, Founder and Chancellor of Sunway University, the iconic sculpture will serve as an integral part of the Sunway family for many years to come and inspire generations of students and future nation builders.

Sculpted single-handedly by artist Infantino Fernandes, the message behind Destiny seeks to portray the relationship between knowledge, and the ability to write one's destiny.

Infantino hailed from Goa, India had initially studied Mechanical Engineering but decided to pursue a path as a Chef in the hospitality industry. He has completed courses in photography, graphic design, web design, 3D animation and ceramics, and eventually branched out to be a full-time sculptor.

Created by using individual strips of mild steel, special attention was given to the robe to replicate the organic sway of the fabric.

Destiny holds a mortarboard and graduation scroll on both hands.

Through the details on the face and body language, the artist attempted to capture the happiness, satisfaction and triumph that one exudes after an achievement.

It stands with a 'Pen', which symbolises the 'character building' knowledge that individuals continue to acquire throughout their life. It also represents the ability for an individual to write their own destiny based on how the character helps shape the way they think, feel and act.

Knowledge is the key to the intelligence that helps to differentiate between a reaction and a response; in identifying between the logical and the emotional, and in deciding between the right and wrong.



Infantino Fernandes

"The message I wanted to convey through Destiny is that it is very much possible for one to take charge of your future. In life, although we might find ourselves in unfavourable circumstances, we still have the power within us to choose how we respond, and knowledge would help us realising the power," said Infantino.

Infantino hopes that Destiny would encourage students and youngsters in realising that they have the power to sow the seeds of transformation in society, a realisation that can be brought about with knowledge.

"Most often we wait for others in the society to make the change, so we could just hop on to the bandwagon. We are lacking the courage to make the change ourselves because we failed to understand that if we make the first move, we could have control over our

lives and indirectly impacting the society we live in," shared the artist.

"Believe that if you follow your heart and passion, whilst simultaneously allowing your mind to stay guard, great things are possible to happen; if you believe in yourself and work hard, you have the power within you to make a difference in the world."

Being the tallest sculpture ever built by Infantino, it took him about eight months till completion.

The artist also shared the challenges he faced while building the sculpture including relocating the working space from his workshop to the loading bay that is spacious enough to accommodate the work.

"Since I prefer to work single-handedly, with every little detail I added in I would have to climb up and down the scaffolding to check if it was aesthetically sound. That means I would have to climb up and down the scaffolding almost 30-40 times a day," shared Infantino.

Besides physical challenges, every piece the artist works on comes with a mental and emotional challenge. "I have come to understand, deal and learnt from these challenges which, I believe it all sums up to teach me lessons that I think it's beneficial to my professional and personal life."

The metal-sculpting artist has been on board with Sunway Group since 2014 and has since crafted 'Yang' in 2015 located at Sunway Putra Mall; 'Victor' in 2016 at Sunway Velocity Mall; 'One' in 2018 at Sunway Lagoon; 'Ibu' in 2019 at Sunway Medical Centre; and 'Destiny' in 2020 at Sunway University. **B**



Professor Perry Hobson – PLUGGED IN WITH THE WORLD

Life may be unpredictable, but he will not be caught off guard

by HAILEY CHUNG

A satellite on the life of Professor Perry Hobson will find him an ardent traveller and a purposeful reader. There is never a hit-and-miss moment, as he seeks to put life into context, translating his experiences into engaging conversations.

Over the years, Professor Hobson has lived and worked in the United Kingdom, United States of America, Hong Kong, and Australia.

He has been a Visiting Professor for over 10 years at the Management Centre Innsbruck in Austria, an Adjunct Professor at Ton Duc Thang University in Vietnam, and sits on the International Advisory Board of Ostrava University in the Czech Republic.

Professor Hobson and his wife, with their two daughters, moved to Malaysia in 2012. He finds it a joy that his family is in for the adventure with him. “We are a pretty internationally-minded family, after all, my kids each have 3-passports and they grew up here in a fourth country,” he shared.

What attracted Professor Hobson to Sunway University was, in his words, “the opportunity to further internationalise this university.” His view is that, “While universities need to be relevant to their local communities, they must, in this day and age, also have a global perspective.”

During the COVID-19 pandemic last year, his role as Pro Vice-Chancellor for Engagement, and Professor of Hospitality and Tourism at Sunway University are deeply challenged.

“It has been quite challenging given my role to lead in international engagement,” he reflected, “this time last year, it would have been more likely for you to find me sitting on a plane than in my office.”

Professor Hobson started at Sunway University in early 2019. At that time, the world was a very different place. Today, his focus and contribution remain the same, which is developing strategic plans for both global and local engagements.

This means engaging with a wide range of stakeholders internally and externally, and appointing an Associate Dean (International) in each School to focus on the outcomes. He also works hard in

raising the profile of Sunway University internationally.

He pointed out that, while in the midst of developing plans for a Global Mobility Office, “COVID-19 is giving us the opportunity to rapidly shift our thinking and to pivot from ‘Global Mobility’ to ‘Global Learning’.”

“The core challenge prior with global mobility is the issues of costs, as well as the challenges of matching the courses and credits transfer taken overseas.”

With global learning, he said, “Being able to connect students from different universities and countries online is not only much cheaper, but also much better for the environment.”

However, there are other obvious challenges which come with participants being in different time-zones. But Malaysians have always embraced international education opportunities more so than any other country, according to Professor Hobson’s knowledge.

“Believe me, trying to get British and Australians to go and study overseas

for a semester or a degree is really hard work. In many cases, they just don’t ‘get it’ despite having the money. With Malaysians, it’s the opposite. I rarely have to explain the benefits, and the challenge here is more to do with the issues of affordability.”

Shocked but Not Lagged

It is not a rare situation that things are moving online. For universities, it encompasses international engagement, exchange, conferences and definitely, classrooms.

Though it seems a ‘Hobson’s choice’ for many, a choice of taking what is available or nothing at all. Sunway University is blessed under Professor Hobson’s leadership, who was already anticipating and preparing for change.

“For many years, I saw that education was due for a ‘disruption’. After all, online booking apps such as Expedia disrupted travel agencies, while Airbnb, did the same to the hotel industry, and e-hailing apps like Uber and Grab, the taxi industry,” he said.

He believes the move to go digital and online has been slower in the higher education, with the 2-hour lecture still being the global 'industry-wide standard'.

"We are now dealing with a generation of 'digital natives' and they will be more demanding of universities to get a mix of what learning works best online, versus what works best on-campus," he said.

Before COVID-19, universities were very much 'on-campus' and face-to-face focused. When it came to community engagement, it was largely event focused.

"Like all institutions, Sunway University is feeling our way into this new world, and we have to adopt new technologies too. While lectures have quickly morphed into webinars, this is not the end game."

"The quality and production of these will have to improve. In fact, I believe that in a few years' time, we will look back at today's online lecture or webinars in horror. It will be like Netflix looking back at the old black and white television shows from the 1960s."

With Sunway University embracing online delivery earlier this year, Professor Hobson has found that students have eased into this learning method.

"Sunway University's participation in the i-Graduate Student Barometer survey showed that while the global overall satisfaction rate with shifting classes online was 66%, Sunway students reported a higher than average satisfaction rate of 76%," he shared.

Streaming is the Next Livelihood

The findings aside, Professor Hobson is also amazed by the agility in which students have responded to the new teaching and training installations.

"Interestingly, in a number of forums I am in, a number of institutions are suggesting that some students actually do much better with dual mode teaching than they did with more traditional face-to-face learning."

He commented that dual mode teaching could also fill the gap in personalisation including allowing students to learn at their own pace, which is something hard to accomplish in a lecture of 400 students.

"The use of learning analytics software can now tell us what students are doing, and whether they are even paying attention. It can track eye movements and facial reactions. In fact, we potentially could have access to a lot more data about what students are doing and feeling than we possibly ever had in the past."

In terms of maintaining online engagement and avoiding online fatigue, Professor Hobson said lectures could be broken down into 20- to 30-minute segments.

"Online fatigue is an issue not just for academics but students as well. Just as I would not stand in a lecture theatre for eight hours, one has to get a balance. Let's face it, not all traditional face-to-face learning was beneficial to everyone either – such as working adults."

"Lecturers will need a digital assistant to write, edit, and produce the lecture, and also all the interactive activities that surround it, while chatbots can be used to answer students' frequently asked questions."

He also said advances in education technology will start to happen much more quickly. Students can expect immersive experiences, in which Sunway University is adopting such as gaming technology and virtual reality headsets.

"The goal is to make lectures an engaging television 'show' rather than just another talking head academic webinar. After all, students are getting enough of those already."

Manoeuvring the Teleportation Season

Typically, Professor Hobson is frequently invited across the region as keynote speaker or panellist, at not only tourism and hospitality conferences, but also international education and student mobility events.

In 2019 alone, he checked into 20 countries. "This year, I have continued to 'Zoom' around the world, but have not left home." More recently, he engaged in an increasing number of virtual conferences, symposiums, panels, and even 'braindates'.

In the midst of his various online engagements, he kept wondering, "How can we help students remain engaged and stay positive during this time?"



The question has inspired him and two colleagues to launch the weekly '30 Minute Talks' (<https://www.30minutetalks.com/>) webinar series. The series aims to help hospitality and tourism students who are studying at home, particularly those struggling with poor content and connectivity.

"We started the weekly webinar series on 15 April and at this point, we have now completed more than 30 weekly webinars."

"Along the way, we also established a network of 'Academic Partner' institutions in the Philippines, Nepal, Macau (SAR-China), the USA, Taiwan, and Australia, which allows students from these institutions to obtain a certificate from attending the webinars."

The Network focusses on a particular theme each week, such as 'Destination Recovery' or 'GastroTourism', with sharing by experts around the world on how tourism is doing and recovering from COVID-19 in particular locations.

The popularity of the '30 Minute Talks' has since grown. "Some weeks, we have had in excess of over 750 registrations on Zoom. We now stream live on YouTube."

Looking at the bigger picture, tertiary education is not just about learning from textbooks, but also about growing up, having new experiences, and engaging with other people who may not share the same views and perspectives.

While COVID-19 indeed has presented universities and individuals with enormous challenges, Professor Hobson's story is encouraging as "It is also presenting us with a lot of opportunities!" **B**

SUNWAY STUDENTS ADAPTING TO THE RHYTHM OF

CHANGE

I appreciate the University's effort for allocating designated study spaces on campus for students who do not have stable internet connectivity at home to attend online classes; as well as ensuring students who are struggling to have access to the counselling department. As for the online learning experience, it's extremely challenging as I feel like there is no separation between school and home.



Shaza binti Sheikh Salleh
BSc (Hons) Marketing

I would say the dual mode teaching experience is both fulfilling and challenging as I had a hard time to adapt at first. Yet, dual mode teaching allowed me to experience the convenience of being able to study anywhere, at any time. I was impressed on how online classes were conducted smoothly via Blackboard Collaborate, eLearn and Outlook. The SEG COVID-19 Student Support Fund was set up to help the students in need, which was really thoughtful of the University.



Lee Jie
BSc (Hons) Business Studies

I would say the University did well in shifting classes online and the implementation of dual mode teaching from August 2020 semester onwards. Students could attend physical classes according to schedule.



Darsini Manibalan
BSc (Hons) Marketing

In my experience, dual mode teaching has been a mixture of both fulfilling and challenging. Initially, the transition from physical classes to online lectures was comprehensively difficult due to the unfamiliarity of the change. However, adapting to the new norm was slightly convenient to ease through, considering the help from the faculty, and the equally understanding lecturers. In my opinion, Sunway University took quick measures when it came to responding to the COVID-19 situation. The solidarity when it came to accommodating students' needs, whether on or off campus, local or international was efficient as the provision of online platforms for dual mode teaching was sorted out thoroughly.



Ranya Diyani binti Muzamil
American Degree Transfer Program

I appreciate the University for allowing physical classes for first and final year students. I find it challenging to attend and maintain my focus throughout online lectures, and there's a lack of physical interaction between lecturers and students that contributes a lot to the learning experiences.



Chong Ken Seng
BSc (Hons) Business Studies

Kudos to the University for handling the abrupt transition into remote learning when the Movement Control Order (MCO) was announced. One of the perks of online learning is that lectures were recorded which facilitates self-learning and students can learn at their own pace and time.



Femi Pan Huey Mynn
BSc (Hons) Marketing

I stayed in the campus residence during the lockdown, and I'm impressed how Sunway has done a great job in ensuring the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and social distancing measures are strictly adhered. I feel much safer going to University with proper procedures that is placed on the campus ground.



Tan Jia Earn
BSc (Hons) in International Hospitality Management

I find that the current dual mode teaching experience is a new experience, as it has been something that I have always wanted to experience. The people in charge relay up-to-date information on time and lecturers are exceptionally accommodating. I think the first online semester was too overwhelming for students due to the massive workload, but the second online semester was way better.



Suzanne Chan Yu Li
BSc (Hons) Biomedicine

How has Academic Enhancement Division (AED) supported academics in managing students and their learning during this challenging time?

Through various programmes that AED offered to support academics, we have encouraged academic colleagues to ensure that (1) their strategies for teaching, learning and assessments are clearly and consistently communicated to students; (2) their learning materials are accessible to all students; (3) their students receive consistent learning support from them and peers; (4) online assessments are inclusive, aligned to learning outcomes and fairly implemented.

AED has run multiple info sessions and conducted workshops to support our academic colleagues. Sessions were all informed by pedagogy of online teaching and focused on supporting academics' adoption of appropriate tools and teaching strategies. For departments or individuals with concerns unique to their situations, AED has also provided customised workshops and consultation sessions. I am happy to say that the feedback that we have received has been very positive. Many of our academic colleagues have also informed us that they received good feedback from their students and attributed this to their successful implementation of what they learned from AED sessions.



THE NEW NORMAL IN SUNWAY

I would like to take this opportunity to thank AED team members – Dr Ann Rosnida Md Deni, Anandraj Govindaraj, Nurul Ain Nadia Ahmad Tarmidzi and Ruzaini Ishak – for their dedication which has enabled AED to support our academic colleagues as much and as well as we have done.

How can academic staff prepare themselves and their students for continued uncertainty in the learning environment?

I think the fundamental key to continuing teaching and supporting students during this uncertain time is to be flexible and the willingness to continue learning. Inclusive teaching means that we take into consideration our students' background and existing circumstances in our teaching and assessment plans.

With the current pandemic and students being in various locations in Malaysia and around the world, factors that may not have affected us before include time difference, lack of access to physical facilities and support, as well as financial hardship. Being flexible means a readiness to explore methods, techniques and ways of learning that support students. We have to face the fact that dual mode teaching is different; it is not a lesser way of learning, but it is different. As such, as academics, we have to be prepared to continue learning in order to adapt to the situation.

Within Sunway University, there are many academics who are advanced practitioners of dual mode teaching. They have considerable experience, have overcome teaching challenges that others may just be facing and have commendable student achievements as evidence of their good practice. Learning from and exchanging ideas with these academics would be extremely beneficial for many. It is for this reason that AED has organised our AED webinar series where

we invite academic colleagues to share their experience as practitioners and demonstrate how they have achieved success in the online teaching of their subjects.

In addition to continuous learning, I think empathy and communicating empathy, is very important. In this very challenging time, everyone is trying to do their best. When we know of academics who were not successful in their attempt at implementing something they have planned, have some empathy and communicate that. If we are not able to offer constructive suggestions or alternatives, the least that we can do is to be good listeners.

It is also crucial to have empathy for our students and the circumstances that they are in. We will not always know of the situations that our students face. When students are unable to attend our live classes, it may be because they are sharing devices with their siblings, have persistent connectivity or other issues. We need to get their feedback, listen to what they are saying and explore how we can still support them.

“Being flexible, having the willingness to continue learning and having empathy apply to students as well. Students may have a set of expectations of how they need to learn and how teachers need to teach but the situation has changed so drastically that they need to be supported to learn differently but still equally successful.”

How can academicians plan for what teaching and learning will look like after the pandemic ends?

One thing that the pandemic has taught us is that well-planned, online provisions can be equally effective as face-to-face teaching and learning, and more effective in terms of time and physical resources in some instance. Of course, fully dual mode teaching may not suit the needs of certain programmes. However, the pandemic has pushed many of us to explore different ways of teaching online and though it is not without challenges, students' feedback indicate that they have found significant benefits to dual mode teaching. Post pandemic when face-to-face teaching is possible, it is only beneficial to consider increasing blended learning provision so that students can derive benefits from both face-to-face and dual mode learning.



Not forsaking its motivation to connect with students and alumni, Student LIFE has committed to attending to Sunway students' internal and external needs even during the Movement Control Order (MCO).

The Student Leadership and Engagement (SLE) team and the Alumni Relations team provided food for students stuck on campus residences during the MCO.

Upon the government's initiative of allowing students back to their home states, the SLE team then facilitated in getting 116 Sunway students to reunite with their families.

STUDENT LIFE EVOLVES TO

Catapulting into Digitalisation

Under the social distancing measures, many available physical services were shifted online.

A webpage was created as a one-stop information and resource centre for updates regarding activities and services for students coping with MCO. These activities were made simple and engaging such as home workout videos, dance challenges, reunions and more.

The Counselling and Wellness team also stepped in to provide individual counselling sessions online, as well as mental health tips and workshops for both students and staff.

“Even though there were many hassles in conducting online counselling, it did not affect our relationship with clients. We cherished those moments, holding each other together. This shows that nothing can break us when human connection, love and genuine care are present,” said counsellor, Cassandra Lee.

Meanwhile, the Scholarship team shifted the scholarship submissions and procedures online. Interviews were conducted virtually and a physical option was made available once the campus reopened. This was in consideration of students who may lack the resources for video calls.

Furthermore, the Career Services team took a virtual turn with their annual Get Hired Career Fair. The venture brought over



100 organisations with over 2000 students participating in various employer webinar sessions, chat sessions, and opportunities for resume submissions, for internships or full-time positions.

As for the global community, the Sunway Cultural Exchange (SCE) team continued to keep in touch with past participants of The Malaysian Experience 2019 from the United Kingdom, Australia, and the United States of America.

“Being able to connect with them during this unprecedented period helped us to understand the sentiments of social development across the globe as we navigated through the new normal together,” said Cultural Exchange Coordinator, Joey Lim.

To bring together the Sunway alumni community, the Alumni Relations team created the 100% Sunway Alumni Podcast Shows, which were hosted by an alumnus to discuss hot topics or share life stories with other invited alumni. Besides that, they did an online talent contest and organised a Virtual Charity Run!

“It is so heart-warming to see alumni coming back and being a part of our programmes and activities, even while some of them are struggling in their own businesses. We love our alumni!” said Sue-Ann Chia, Head of Alumni Relations.

Of course, volunteering did not stop. The Sunway Student Volunteers organised virtual events to engage the members, the public, and various non-government organisations (NGOs). Several video interviews were done on topics such as health, environment, and wildlife. All of these materials were shared on their social media platforms.



Orientation with SOPs in place



Monash-Sunway Alumni Charity V-Run 2020 presentation to 'Kakak'

MEET COVID-19 CHALLENGES

Bringing Life Back to Campus

After the MCO was lifted, Student LIFE then utilised technology, innovation and creativity to expand the blended learning environment.

When the new semester began, the Student Support team transitioned from online orientations to mixed mode orientations, all following the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) of 1-metre physical distancing and digital registration via QR codes.

For international students who were unable to enter Malaysia, the SCE team conducted the "Sunway: The Virtual Experience", a pre-orientation programme to help transition students into Malaysian and Sunway culture before diving straight into e-classrooms.

Without delay, Student LIFE also brought back more activities and programmes



C&S Carnival Booth

for students who were on campus. The Clubs & Societies (C&S) Carnival was held in September to allow clubs and societies to recruit new members.

Awareness was created among new and returning students of many clubs, societies, student leadership bodies, about events and activities on campus. The carnival saw various performances and showcases which were done with strict SOPs.

"C&S Carnival, although a challenge this year, was great - especially with the student leaders who rode the same ship with us, working, and learning together along the way," said Amanda Chong, SLE Senior Executive.

Extending the concept of student life and friendship, the SLE team held the Friendship Month 2020 with activities both online and offline. The month saw expressions of gratitude towards friendships, friendly football competitions, and a special forum in collaboration with the Counselling and Wellness team on "Friendship in the Time of Pandemic". These initiatives, among many others, continue to strengthen Sunway as the most happening campus.

Due to the travel ban, the 2020 Chancellors Scholars were unable to experience the 3-week Lancaster Summer Programme which was part of their scholarship. The SCE team pivoted and created a special first-launch hybrid programme together with the Lancaster Global Experiences Team, called "Lancaster: The Virtual Experience".

Scholars gathered together on campus to experience Lancaster and its culture through an interactive session with staff and students, through virtual campus and town visits, along with games and food.

Despite the many hardships and uncertainties that COVID-19 has brought, Student LIFE has stepped up in excellence to ensure that the well-being of students and staff are taken care of. **B**



Chancellors Scholars with Lancaster Friends

SUNWAY UNIVERSITY RESEARCHERS ADVANCING WORLD'S FIRST HOLISTIC AND COMPREHENSIVE INDEX ON COVID-19

Sunway University is working on the Global COVID-19 Index (GCI) to consolidate COVID-19 data from verified sources of 184 countries into a comprehensive index which governments, businesses, and communities can refer to.

This GCI is an international collaboration with PEMANDU Associates, and the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI) Malaysia.

With the GCI, countries can compare their performances to identify the best health practices and efforts during the pandemic, which is vital as the world grapples under the slew of news, data, and opinions.

The GCI includes daily updated data on the rate of recovery, active cases, and the number of tests conducted.

It also considers countries' previously evaluated ability to detect, respond, and treat infections of any epidemic, based on the publicly available Global Health Security Index published in October 2019.

With the help of these data, the GCI can track recoveries in countries of neighbouring regions to monitor readiness for easing border restrictions.

Professor Peh Suat Cheng, Professor and Special Adviser on Medical Education Development and Director of Ageing Health and Well-Being Research Centre at Sunway University said that the researchers are currently deriving insightful data from the GCI that can help governments and societies identify emerging trends.

"For example, we have identified that countries that have high-ambient temperatures and low latitudes appear to have low COVID-19 case fatality rates. This can serve to inform policy decisions and epidemiological research," Professor Peh said.



From left: Professor Peh Suat Cheng, Professor Serge Demidenko and Woody Ang

Researchers from the School of Medical and Life Sciences will also look into developing their own research papers using the data from GCI, and other multivariate statistical analysis, machine learning, and mathematical modelling data from researchers at the University's School of Mathematical Sciences.

Ultimately, the GCI encompasses the Severity Index and the Recovery Index.

Woody Ang, Executive Vice President at PEMANDU Associates said the Country Severity Index is a measure of how much the country is severely impacted from the pandemic.

"It takes into consideration the total number of confirmed cases and total proportionate death due to COVID-19 since the outbreak commenced."

"These contribute 70% of its weightage and behave more like a 'scarring parameter', which tells us whether the country is recovering from a lower case/death toll or a higher one. It is not a measure of current ongoing severity," Ang explained.

The Severity Index also takes into consideration the overall Healthcare Preparedness by utilising a 30% weightage assigned to pre-existing static sub-indicators completed by the Global Health Security Index (GHS), he added.

"We are in the midst of improving and

potentially replacing the latter static indicators through our engagements with the World Health Organisation (WHO)."

As for the Recovery Index, it measures how well a country is handling the crisis from a health and safety perspective.

Professor Serge Demidenko, Dean of the School of Engineering and Technology at Sunway University said his researchers have been interested in providing specialist support in Computer Database Technologies and application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to Data Analytics.

The aim, he believed, is not to only analyse past data, but to forecast and to model future trends.

"During this COVID-19 time, AI and Analytics will allow us to use available data to understand the impact of the pandemic better. Thus, assisting in proposing appropriate solutions."

"Our academics are available to team up with collaborators both locally and internationally to explore new recovery solutions for the post COVID-19 world," said Professor Serge.

The GCI has enabled best practice analysis in the form of the Global Pathfinder: Global Lessons in Tackling COVID-19, a 118-page detailed report that PEMANDU Associates undertook with the UK-Based Delivery Associates. **B**



SUNWAY UNIVERSITY RESEARCHER IS BUSTING THE DUST

Senior Lecturer from the Department of Biological Sciences has made it her interest to study dust mites. According to Dr Kavita Reginald, the home environment has about 10 common dust mite species.

From her doctoral research, she found that each mite is capable of producing over 30 distinct allergens. She also discovered a new dust mite allergen, subsequently named *Der f 22* by the international allergen nomenclature committee.

“Upon further characterisation, this new allergen was found to be an important cause of allergic reactions within the local population,” said Dr Kavita, who is passionate about understanding the genetic and immunological factors that contribute to allergic conditions.

Her other notable works include identifying the bacteria *Staphylococcus aureus* specifically found on skin lesions of patients suffering from atopic dermatitis, a common type of eczema.

Allergic diseases are a global health problem which affects up to 25% of the world’s population, representing a heavy burden for both the patients and the health care system.

“Allergic diseases are influenced by both genetic and environmental factors. My research investigates both these aspects to obtain a holistic understanding of allergies and its causes,” said Dr Kavita.

An allergic reaction happens when a foreign antigen (or allergen) is recognised by the immune system

(specifically IgE antibodies). This leads to the activation of the system causing downstream symptoms of allergies such as breathlessness, wheezing, itchy eyes, and runny nose.

With regards to major allergens which affect the Malaysian population, Dr Kavita characterises and identifies the source (dust mites, pollen, cockroaches, fungus) as well as the molecular signatures of these allergens. She hopes to come up with better diagnostic tools in identifying specific allergens.

Dr Kavita did seven years of post-doctoral research in Austria and France in the area of immunology research. She believes that research and scientific advancements have no real meaning or impact unless it is shared and understood by the masses.

“In this spirit, I bring various aspects of my research, news of the latest advancements in the field of immunology, and insights from recent scientific publications into the classroom at any possible opportunity,” said Dr Kavita who lectures on Clinical Chemistry, Pathology and Immunology.

Since joining Sunway University three years ago, she tries to expose her students to diverse laboratory techniques in allergy research, such as allergy diagnosis or to quantify levels of allergens within the dust.

Dr Kavita believes these experiments will help expose students to the practical aspects of her research area. **B**

Growing up with constant awareness of the deadly Human Immunodeficiency Virus (commonly known as HIV), Associate Professor Dr Tommy Tong Yuh Koon, Head of the Department of Biological Sciences at Sunway University, is motivated to curb the disease.

With a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Immunology, he has been researching the HIV field for over 15 years, attempting different approaches and evaluating the prototype vaccines in mice and rabbits.

“For vaccines, you can have 100 good ideas, but probably only one or two would actually work on mice, and probably none will work on humans. That is a reality of vaccine development, and that is why it’s a big challenge,” shared Dr Tommy.

Malaysia was officially presented with the validation certificate for the elimination of mother-to-child transmission in 2018. It is a landmark with the preventive programme taken place in Malaysia with guidance from the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Even if there is no effective cure or vaccine developed for the deadly virus, HIV is a controllable chronic infection with proper medical care and patient care support.

Dr Tommy is working on two pieces of HIV research – to profile the type of antibodies present in HIV-infected individuals in Malaysia, and to understand Malaysia and Asian countries perception towards the HIV end-of-life (EOL) research.



AN INFECTIOUS PASSION FOR FINDING THE HIV CURE

Dr Tommy is interested in observing long-term HIV infected people that do not require antiviral treatment. According to him, these people may have some strong antibodies, capable of killing HIV virus in their body. Many HIV-1 infected individuals develop some degree of cross-creative antibodies in their plasma, which gives them protection from developing AIDS.

“Looking at these individual will help to better understand why some people develop strong antibody responses and some don’t,” shared Dr Tommy.

In Dr Tommy’s word, the information collected will be used to incorporate specific ‘designs’ into future prototype vaccine.

These research projects are in collaboration with Dr Tee Kok Keng from the University of Malaya on profiling antibodies in HIV individuals in Malaysia; and Dr Elizaveta Berezina from the Department of Psychology at Sunway University on the HIV end-of-life (EOL) research.

These researches are also governed by the Sunway University Research Ethics Committee and have received two internal grants from Sunway University.

Dr Tommy thanked the University for their financial and infrastructure support. These supports enable Dr Tommy to successfully graduate from his first Master’s degree student who worked on “Profiling antibodies in HIV individuals in Malaysia” project.

While conducting his research, Dr Tommy keeps himself up-to-date with local and international literature in the HIV field. He believes that identifying key areas of HIV research in Malaysia is crucial in coming up with better healthcare and support for the patient, and in reducing the number of transmission and disease burdens.

“Research is a never-ending endeavour. It took my post-doctoral supervisor 10 years before seeing the result of his idea come to fruition. The best way to describe research is that it will continue as long as the passion to contribute for the betterment of the community is there,” Dr Tommy shared. **B**

INBOUND STUDENT FROM LANCASTER ENJOYS UNUSUAL ABROAD EXPERIENCE AMID PANDEMIC

A student from Lancaster University, Jasmin Platt, embarked on what many considered – a study abroad experience to be remembered. To her, the COVID-19 pandemic did not interrupt the eight months of her learning experience in Malaysia but has made it even more memorable.

“The best part of the exchange programme was meeting lots of local friends in Sunway who introduced me to so many new foods and taught me about their culture,” Jasmin highlighted.

“The company I interned at also invited me to their Chinese New Year open house for their special celebration meal which was a lovely experience. I loved trying new foods, especially the Chinese New Year snacks.”

Another remarkable moment she raised was the unexpected victory in the Sunway Netball Tournament. Jasmin won gold in the women’s category and silver in the mixed category. She shared that her women’s category team had only decided to enter at the very last minute, with some of them only meeting each other on the day of the tournament.

The BSc (Hons) Psychology student took a total of eight subjects throughout her three semesters spent at Sunway University.

The subjects were Counselling Psychology, Education Psychology, Human Neuropsychology, Community Mental Health, Psychology Seminar, Learning Disabilities, Behaviour Modification, and an internship experience at Kairos Resources.

“My favourite subject during my time spent at Sunway was Human Neuropsychology which used a reverse classroom teaching method. At first, I found this challenging, but as the term progressed, I enjoyed learning from my other classmates.”

“Being in a small class, we knew each other on a personal level which was nice. I also develop my presentation skills as each lecture involved a student presenting a lab report,” said Jasmin.

She has also discovered how the teaching and learning methods at Sunway are slightly different from Lancaster.



“Lectures here at Sunway were more personal, engaging and longer. At Lancaster, my lectures were generally one hour whereas at Sunway they can last for two to three hours. Additionally, each module had an element of group work, many times with a presentation, which we do not have at Lancaster as everything is mostly individually assessed,” Jasmin said.

The teamwork culture is something she found refreshing. One thing she gathered is that Sunway students work collectively and socialise by studying together.

“Everyone I met was so helpful and made me feel at home. Group work is second nature to me now.”

In exploring Malaysia, she visited Cameron Highlands, Genting Highlands, and Tioman Island. She particularly enjoyed strawberry picking and visiting the mossy forest at Cameron Highlands.

Finally, she concurred that the eight months student exchange programme has helped her grow in more ways than one.

“Studying at Sunway has made me grow as a person, having to adapt to a new culture and way of living has helped my independence and the belief that I can achieve anything I set my mind to.”

“Additionally, I have learnt new people skills making new friends from many different countries,” said Jasmin.

Her advice to other overseas students looking to enrol in this programme: “Take advantage of all the opportunities you have on offer at the University, eat as much food as you can, and be sure to explore Kuala Lumpur.” **B**

A BOARD GAME ON ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Sunway University introduced a board game titled “Are You the Master of Sustainability?” where players can learn and play their part in preserving the earth’s resources for future generations.

The multiplayer board game aims to create awareness and understanding of the United Nations’ 17 Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) to a wider audience.

“We are constantly stepping up our efforts to improve current practices and doing more to protect and preserve our planet,” said Dr Elizabeth Lee, Chief Executive Officer of Sunway Education Group.

Staff from the Jeffrey Sachs Center on Sustainable Development (JSC) and students of the Master in Sustainable Development Management programme played a role in the game’s design and the crafting of questions to educate players on the need to find solutions to some of the most pressing social and environmental issues in Malaysia and the world today.

Professor Graeme Wilkinson, Vice-Chancellor of Sunway University said, “The UN SDGs encompass several urgent issues in the world today such as global poverty, access to education, climate change, and the need for responsible consumption and production.”

“The board game will certainly be an interesting tool to help spread awareness and knowledge of the UN SDGs. As with most board games, people of all ages can play,” he added.

Sunway University, under the Sunway Education Group together with Sunway Group, has been committed to the SDGs. This board game is a commemoration of the 5th anniversary of the launch of the UN SDGs, and the University’s milestone and landmark achievement.

The JSC was set up at the end of 2016. The Center serves as the Southeast Asia regional hub of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) which supports the localisation of SDGs and their implementation.

It has helped to develop long-term transformation pathways for sustainable development, promote education around Agenda 2030, and launch solution initiatives.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 and provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the



Sunway University’s “Are You the Master of Sustainability?” board game is aimed to create awareness and understanding of the 17 UN SDGs

planet, now and into the future.

In 2020, the JSC has been chosen to join New York and Paris as the world’s third United Nations SDSN centre.

“Tan Sri Jeffrey Cheah, our very own Founder and Chancellor of Sunway University, is an advocate for the environment and sustainable development,” said Dr Lee.

Tan Sri Dato’ Seri Dr Jeffrey Cheah AO is Chair of SDSN Malaysia Leadership Council and a Member of the UN SDSN Leadership Council.

The first edition of the Sunway Education Group’s new board game were gifted to various corporate leaders in recognition of their support for the UN SDGs. **B**

SUNWAY UNIVERSITY PARTNERS WITH MYFINB GROUP

Sunway University entered into a collaboration with MyFinB Group with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

Director of the Centre for Accountability and Governance Research (CAGR) at Sunway University, Professor Susela Devi K Suppiah said that the partnership will look into having the centre off-campus at the Centre of AI Innovation (CE.A.I.) at MyFinB Group in Kuala Lumpur.

“The partnership will also look into the development and implementation of a new Accounting Masters programme which aims to

empower accountants on harnessing the use of emerging technologies specifically Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Data Analytics,” she said.

Together, the University and the group will work on offering short courses, joint research projects and grants advocating work related to the industry as well as national issues which will impact Malaysia’s workforce and SMEs of the future.

The CAGR, through CE.A.I. and in collaboration with Sunway i-Labs, aims to assist students on entrepreneurship through MyFinB centre’s venture building programme.



Professor Susela Devi K Suppiah

Bringing

MATHEMATICS

to Life for Young Students



A team engaging in a group discussion on a mathematics problem

The School of Mathematical Sciences (SMS) at Sunway University advocates that mathematics be taught in a fun, easy-to-understand, and student-centred interactive way.

Professor Ho Chee Kit, Dean of the SMS, initiated the Fun Mathematics Camp to help primary and secondary school children develop an appreciation for the beauty of mathematics.

In the two-month programme, participants aged from 11 to 15 indulged in non-traditional and innovative mathematics challenges.

“Every participant was allowed to take learning into their own hands as they explored obstacles, brainstormed ideas, and creatively resolved mathematics-related problems,” Professor Ho stated.

According to Professor Ho, developing the minds of the future generation to embrace mathematics is a key element in the Science, Technology, Engineering,



Group photo of all the Fun Mathematics Camp participants

and Mathematics (STEM) education, as it enables competitiveness in them to face a world of endless possibilities.

There are various project activities from Mathemagic, Algebra in Action, Electrifying Calculation Techniques, number tricks, card tricks, mathematical games, specially-designed mini mathematics competition, demonstration and presentation.

The participants were engaged daily through online classes and prepared for a competition at the end of the Camp.

“We hope to see these students improve their skills in critical thinking, problem-solving, and having an increased interest in learning mathematics. Overall, we hope to improve their perception of mathematics,” shared Professor Ho.

Sunway Group sponsored two teams from SMK Bandar Sunway and one team from SJK (C) Chee Wen to join the Camp.

Nicholas Yeo Chee Lek, an in-house actuary at Sunway University, sponsored another team from the National Association for Gifted Children Malaysia (NAGCM) and two teams from Dignity for Children Foundation.

Each participating team comprised a group of five students.

“It is easy for children to learn these days. This is an absolute advantage for them. It caught me by surprise that there is so much to learn about mathematics!” said Evan Tey, a student helper for the Camp who is pursuing BSc (Hons) in Actuarial Studies.

Claudia Tia, a student helper from Sunway Actuarial and Financial Excellence (SAFE) club, said she was impressed with the participants’ presentations during the grand finale.

“They invested a lot of effort into their work. The participants even created an excel spreadsheet that was beyond my expectations. They are young yet so capable of explaining their work to the audience,” she said.

Another student helper of the Camp, Wu Wen Qi, a year-one BSc (Hons) Actuarial Studies student, was also moved watching these young participants.

“It inspired me to truly go and learn other forms or topics related to mathematics instead of what is in the school syllabus,” Wu said. **B**

M Nazri Muhd, Founder and CEO of MyFinB Group (Singapore) was appointed as Sunway University’s Adjunct Industry Professor (AI Practice).

He will be contributing to the University’s academic endeavours in the field of AI, big data analytics, and data sciences.

In his role as the University advisor, Nazri will provide advice and guidance pertaining to AI and analytics – in industry projects, curriculum design for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, and new business model strategies for Sunway University. **B**

STUDENT PSYCHED ON A BROADENING EXPERIENCE



Daniel Tan Meng Wei from BSc (Hons) Psychology is convinced that the course complements him as an individual who enjoys being a listener.

When an opportunity arrived to broaden this exposure, the 22-year old student said yes to a full one-year study abroad programme at Lancaster University.

During his time there, Daniel took up eight subjects, all relating to his Psychology calling and he appreciated the different learning experience.

“Lancaster is more theoretical, in which the students engaged more in literature

essays and writing, and not application-based assignments compared to Sunway,” Daniel shared.

Aside from the academic adventure, he met his expectations for new cultural exposures and growing his social circles.

“The most interesting time was when my friends and I travelled around the United Kingdom together to explore urban and suburban areas alike. It was great fun, as I got to see so many amazing sights and historical architectures like in Leeds, Nottingham and Blackpool.”

“Blackpool was amazing as we spent the whole day there in the theme park

– riding all sorts of roller coasters, and having fish and chips,” said Daniel.

He also picked up independence in his time abroad.

“It helped in my personal experience that I could take care of myself without having family members around. I am glad to have met a few friends that are like role models to me.” **B**





Jerrine Koay and Her Dedication to Her Work

by **DR ELIZABETH LEE**

With great sorrow, we at the Sunway Education Group (SEG) bid farewell to Jerrine Koay, with her passing on 2nd October 2020. Jerrine loyally served at SEG for 36 years where she led as Director of Public Relations and as a member of the Executive Committee of SEG.

Jerrine embarked on her career at SEG when she was transferred from the Sunway Group in 1986. As one of our pioneers, she witnessed and contributed to the transformation and growth of our one institution to the 17 institutions today.

Her commitment, professionalism and dedication to her work were exemplary.

Although busy with her day-to-day tasks, Jerrine was full of life, even while she was undergoing treatment. She will be fondly remembered for her cheerful and unassuming nature, her selflessness. She was always ready to assist when someone needed help, whether it be advice, guidance or getting the job done. Being one with a big heart, she gave generously and was happy to celebrate small moments and little achievements. Meticulous in her work, she upheld the Sunway values of humility, integrity and excellence throughout her career and life.

She was not only a director but a hands-on mentor, colleague and friend. Her family misses a loving wife and mother. For Jerrine's dedication and loyalty throughout her years at Sunway, I pay absolute tribute to her. She is truly missed.

JOY, PRIDE AND CHALLENGES OF RUNNING A FAMILY BUSINESS

Sisters share their 'next in line' responsibilities



Huat Huat Kouping was founded in 1988 in Muar, Johor, by the parents of alumni Tee Choo Ling, BSc (Hons) in Accounting and Finance, and Tee Jia Xin, BSc (Hons) in Actuarial Studies.

It started as a baking business in a relative's backyard that has now grown into a production factory with more than 60 staff.

Choo Ling and Jia Xin have grown up being observers of the family business. Today, they are involved with the decision making and running of the business, while following and developing it from their parents' footsteps.

Back in 1988, the business offered products such as *Teo Chew soft cake*, *kuih bahulu*, braided cookies, and mooncake.

After 32 years of experiments, they have expanded their product line to more than 20 types of pastries. Their signature is the salted green bean pastry which is also known as "*Tau Shar Piah*".



From left: Tee Jia Xin, Dr Elizabeth Lee and Tee Choo Ling

How and in what way has your journey at Sunway impacted your life and future?

Choo Ling: Sunway University encourages students to be creative and brave to share their own ideas with others. This has trained me to work well with superiors, colleagues, and clients without fear of speaking up.

Before Huat Huat Kouping, I worked with Burger King, Singapore as a Finance Executive. At that time, the company was undergoing restructuring. I had the opportunity to showcase my abilities as they then entrusted me with more important tasks in the absence of a manager.

Jia Xin: Being a Sunway student was a very fulfilling journey. I met with people from diverse backgrounds who helped me learn their culture, living habits, and even their local delicacies. This experience assisted in developing my social skills and understanding customers' needs in the business world.

What made you select your current path in life?

Choo Ling: Taking over the family business was not my first choice. I thought the business would be handed down from father to son as per the traditional mind-set.

After two years in Singapore, my parents expanded the business by moving the shop to a factory and encouraged us to take over as long as we were willing to learn.

Knowing I could help my parents, I decided to return to Malaysia and took on the role of Managing Director in Huat Huat Kouping.

Jia Xin: I graduated just as the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Unable to secure a job in

the actuarial field, I decided to help my parents in their business until I manage to find my own career path.

What are the challenges you face as a young leader and how did you overcome it?

Choo Ling: The most important asset of the company is the staff. They are also the biggest challenge as it is not easy to change the mentality especially that of the senior staff.

Though they do not view me as a leader, I am taking this period to understand their feelings and work methods. In this way, the discussion process with them has also smoothened.

Aside from senior staff, dealing with my parents' mind-set is also not easy. To them, departmental meetings, meeting minutes, and staff trainings are a waste of time. They feel that I should focus more on the production of the pastries.

Because of this, I must prove to them that my management skills are workable without affecting the factory's performance. I also look to create a happy working environment with no office politics and arguments.

How is it like working with family? How do you balance work and personal or family life?

Choo Ling: When I was working in Singapore, my weekends were usually for rest and yoga classes. Since I started working with my family, I do not have much of a work-life balance because we get to work immediately on any ideas or issues, even on weekends.

I do not mix my personal life with the job, therefore, my rationality during discussions may sometimes offend my siblings. I will, however, apologise and

explain, after which we will sit down and discuss.

Jia Xin: I am more sentimental compared to my sister. Working with one's family can be difficult as conflicts will occur. But it helps that our characters are different, we can complement one another.

During this pandemic, what are the actions being taken to sustain your business?

Before the pandemic, selling our products through online platforms were never taken into consideration. We did not want to have the risk of our products being damaged during delivery.

This time, we attempted it and it is now a new business opportunity! While the overall sales may still be lower than usual, online orders are picking up and giving us something to work on in this new normal.

As the second generation for this business, do you feel pressured by the elders – especially since different generations may view things differently?

Yes, we do feel pressured as we are no longer carefree children playing around the shop and talking to the uncles and aunts. We have a greater responsibility now as we need to ensure the growth of the business.

Since we have our own factory, we decided to focus on promoting our brand, mainly via social media. With the new age of promotional methods, we managed to convince our father to make TikTok videos! Currently, he enjoys doing it because he has received positive feedback from friends.

Have an alumni story to share? Reach out to the Sunway Alumni Relations team via alumni@sunway.edu.my as we would love to hear from you!

JOEY OOI BEE LAW

BA (HONS) DIGITAL FILM PRODUCTION

Due to family complications, I stayed and grew up in an orphanage from age 12 onwards. I have always felt different from my peers. For example, I could not attend mainstream schools and had to watch others progress towards higher education while I stayed back to work at the orphanage.

If I could describe what I felt, it was 'directionless'. I enjoyed studying yet I was deprived of it. I anticipated my future but it was so uncertain. So, I lived one day at a time, hoping for a miracle every day, which was eventually fulfilled.

One day, my music teacher shared my story with Dr Elizabeth Lee. I was then led to apply for the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation Community Scholarship which provided me the opportunity to pursue my Diploma in Graphic and Multimedia Design.

Finally, something 'normal' happened. I enjoyed my university life - attending classes, rushing assignments, utilising facilities and hanging out with friends. Since then, my future was no longer uncertain.

After graduating with my diploma, I yearned to further my studies in film making. And that was fulfilled too! I attended an interview and shared my passion. I was the first scholar for the BA (Hons) Digital Film Production programme.

I am grateful for Sunway's generosity, and also the University's sincerity in looking after the personal needs of each individual. Despite the differences and various backgrounds of the scholars, Sunway has never failed to bring the best out of everyone.

My fondest memory with Sunway was a documentary project where I had to tell my life story. I was afraid but motivated by the goal I had set during my scholarship interview.

Thank you Tan Sri Jeffrey Cheah and everyone in Sunway who has touched my life in simple or big ways. I pray that God will continue to bless you bountifully as you have blessed others.



DESMOND CHONG

BSC (HONS) IN ACTUARIAL STUDIES

Senior Actuarial Executive, RHB Insurance Berhad

Math-related subjects excite me. And so, I opted for a profession which applies mathematical knowledge for problem-solving.

Upon receiving my SPM results with flying colours for Maths subjects, my teacher encouraged me to pursue my interests. That was when I decided on an Actuarial Science degree.

Local universities were offering my choice of programme but I was especially attracted to Sunway University, which offered me a 75% tuition fee waiver based on my results.

During my scholarship interview, they acknowledged my eagerness to clinch an extra 25%. And so, I had my scholarship upgraded and became one of three individuals to receive the Sunway Excellence Scholarship.

Currently, I work as a Senior Actuarial Executive with RHB Insurance Bhd, specialising in reserving and valuation. I was promoted to this position in less than two years; learning new responsibilities, applying theoretical knowledge and making sound decisions on crucial processes.

Tertiary education has sharpened my skills and expertise in preparing me for the industry. My soft skills were also cultivated through presentations and participation in events.

I met many great lecturers who were willing to guide me. I am proud to be a Sunway alumnus, and I will continuously honour that with my achievements.



EUNICE LOW TAIN YUNG

AMERICAN DEGREE TRANSFER PROGRAM

Marketing Associate, Joey Mattress

I began my tertiary education with Sunway University's American Degree Transfer Program as a Marketing major student with a minor in General Business.

I then transferred to Western Michigan University's (WMU) Howarth College of Business on my fourth year and graduated in the spring of 2020.

My experience at these two universities was wonderful. At Sunway, I had a brief stint as an assistant to the head of partnerships and student engagement.

At WMU, I was a Marketing Assistant for WMU's Auxiliary Enterprises. Believe it or not, I still apply the things I have learned at that job to my current position as a Marketing Associate!

Later, I started looking for jobs in December 2019 after knowing my impending graduation on April 25, 2020. A few companies were interested in

hiring me, but I was asked to return home when COVID-19 hit.

I came back early of the year and completed my studies here. Afterwards, I took a few months break to spend time with my family before starting my job search in mid-June.

I was fortunate to secure a job in a wonderful Malaysian start-up – Joey Mattress as a Marketing Associate. It has been a blast since I started working with them in mid-July.

Sunway University was crucial to my development as a working professional and a functioning member of society! Other than equipping me with knowledge, it has also facilitated my soft skills such as networking, time-management, and teamwork.

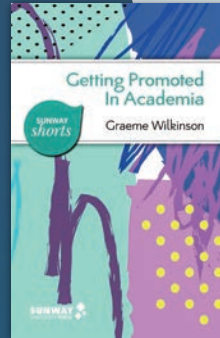
Would I have gone to a different university? No! I am a proud Sunway University Alumna!



Current titles in the series:

Sunway Shorts is the flagship series of Sunway University Press that aims to present insights from thought leaders and experts as easy reads. These pocket-sized books are meant for the everyday general readers and are made for light reading.

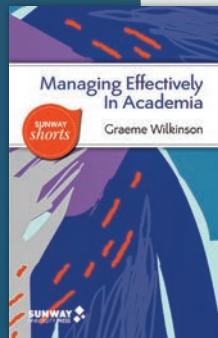
The titles in the series are available in paperback at **RM32.90** and e-books at **RM24.90** each.



Getting Promoted in Academia: Practical Career Guidance for Ambitious Academics and Aspiring Leaders in Higher Education

by Professor Graeme Wilkinson, Vice-Chancellor of Sunway University

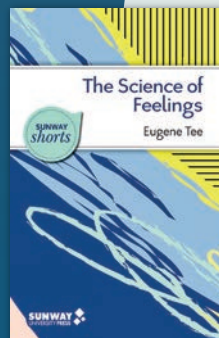
The book is a short guide to career development for academics, offering sensible and practical advice on how to rise to the top. Drawing from the author's wealth of experience in international universities, this book is packed with tips, tactics, and strategies perfect for any academic who wants a high-flying career in the competitive world of higher education.



Managing Effectively in Academia: A Guide to Good Practice for Academic Managers and Leaders in Higher Education

by Professor Graeme Wilkinson, Vice-Chancellor of Sunway University

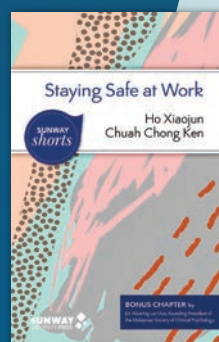
The book provides a compact guide to good management practice in contemporary higher education. It covers key topics in day-to-day academic management including managing academic staff, handling students as customers, thinking and acting entrepreneurially and strategically, and dealing with some of the most challenging issues faced by academic managers in 21st-century universities.



The Science of Feelings: What Psychological Research Tells Us About Our Emotions

by Eugene Tee, Associate Professor of the Department of Psychology, HELP University

The book is a story of our emotions, a guide to understanding why and how we feel as human beings. This book explores the different emotions we experience, the way they shape and influence our lives, and how essential they have always been to us. Drawing on the rich psychological research on emotions, this book invites you to revisit your emotions and to better appreciate and understand how feeling states define us and our humanity.



Staying Safe at Work: A Guide to Occupational Safety & Health

by Ho Xiaojun & Chuah Chong Ken, Registered OSH Officers in the private sector (Ho Xiaojun was formerly the OSH officer for SEG)

The book serves as an introduction to safety and health practices in the workplace, from theories on how accidents occur to current applications of workplace safety measures. With case studies drawn from the authors' experience, this book also provides a brief overview of Malaysia's laws and practices related to workplace safety and dedicates a chapter to mental health management in the workplace written by Professor Alvin Ng Lai Oon, Professorial Teaching Fellow and Associate Dean (International) – School of Medical and Life Sciences.